

Public Health Advisory

Mumps May Be Coming to Kentucky!

Physicians and other medical professionals may soon see mumps, a vaccine preventable viral disease, in patients seen for acute illnesses in their offices, in urgent care centers, or emergency rooms across the Commonwealth.

The largest mumps epidemic in America in about 25 years has now been reported in Iowa. Among cases there with known immunization histories, 65% have documentation of receiving two doses of mumps vaccine. The first reports of illness were in December 2005 at a university in eastern Iowa. Since then, 365 cases have been reported in Iowa with 30% of cases being seen in college students. The illness has spread to all but one of the states surrounding Iowa, including Illinois and Missouri, two states that border Kentucky.

The actual source of the Iowa epidemic has not been determined. Mumps virus cultured from some Iowa patients has been identified by the Centers for Disease Control as genotype G. Genotype G mumps virus caused a large epidemic in Great Britain that peaked in 2005 with about 56,000 cases and a high attack rate in young adults.

Mumps is an acute viral illness characterized by swelling of one or more of the salivary glands. The incubation period is from 14 to 25 days after exposure. The prodromal symptoms are non-specific. Parotitis, which may be unilateral or bilateral, is the most common manifestation and occurs in 30% to 40% of infected persons. Complications can include central nervous system involvement, orchitis, oophoritis, and more uncommonly pancreatitis and deafness.

Laboratory tests for confirmation of mumps infection include (1) isolation of mumps virus from a clinical specimen, (2) positive serologic testing (IgM antibody) soon after onset, or (3) by significant rises in mumps specific IgG antibody between acute and convalescent sera.

There is no specific treatment for mumps virus infection. An effective vaccine for mumps has been available for some time and is routinely recommended as part of childhood immunizations in the United States.

Mumps is transmitted by airborne transmission or by droplet spread, or from direct contact with the saliva of an infected person. Individuals are most likely to transmit the virus between two days before to four days after onset. Individuals with mumps should be excluded from work or school for nine days after onset, depending upon the immunization history of contacts at those locations.

Mumps is a reportable disease in Kentucky. Additional information is available in the Kentucky Reportable Disease Desk Reference, and from the CDC, http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/submenu/sub_mumps.htm.